

**THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA**

Monday, May 12, 2025

7:00 P.M. Regular Session

MINUTES

Place: Commissioners' Chambers, Second Floor, Durham County Government Administrative Complex, 200 East Main Street, Durham, North Carolina

Present: Chair Nida Allam, Vice Chair Dr. Mike Lee and Commissioners Michelle Burton, Wendy Jacobs and Stephen Valentine

Presider: Chair Nida Allam

Zoom Hybrid
Participants: 18

Regular Session – 7:00 PM

Opening of Regular Session - Pledge of Allegiance

Agenda Adjustments

Commissioner Burton moved, seconded by Commissioner Valentine to approve the agenda

The motion carried unanimously.

Announcements

Monica Wallace, Clerk to the Board read the following announcements:

1. **Durham Transit Tracker Dashboard** – The Durham County Transportation Department is excited to announce it has launched a new Durham Transit Tracker Dashboard dedicated to tracking progress on accomplishing the goals of the Durham Transit Plan. It outlines budgets and expenditures on transit projects funded by the Durham County Transit plan, including key metrics of projects. Find it here: <https://durham-transit-tracking-dashboard-fitp.hub.arcgis.com/>.
2. **Family Fun Day 2025** – Families & Communities Rising Head Start & Early Head Start presents ... Carnival: Family Fun Day 2025 on Friday, May 16. This event runs from 1-4 p.m. at Durham County Memorial Stadium, 750 Stadium Drive.
3. **DCo Convenience Site Closure** – The Durham County General Services Department announces that the Redwood Convenience Site, located at 100 Electra Road, will temporarily close for 4

weeks to allow for tree removal and road construction to set up a new traffic pattern for easier access for residents. The site will close to the public on Monday, June 9 and reopen on Monday, July 7, 2025. The Northern (11894 N. Roxboro Road) and Parkwood (5828 Highway 55) will remain open Monday-Friday from 7 a.m. – 6 p.m.; Saturday: 7 a.m. -12 p.m. Closed Sundays and County Holidays/Training Days (June 13, June 19 and July 4). More info: <https://www.dconc.gov/county-departments/departments-f-z/general-services/solid-waste-recycling-and-litter-control/durham-county-convenience-sites>.

4. **Sheriff Birkhead to Host Community Meeting in Bahama** – Durham County Sheriff Clarence F. Birkhead will host a public meeting at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, May 20 to answer general questions about public safety at the Bahama Ruritan Club, located at 8202 Stagville Road in Bahama. Sheriff Birkhead looks forward to hearing from residents about concerns and issues impacting North Durham. Contact GJMarsh@DurhamSheriff.org or call 919-560-0904 for more information.
5. **Extension's 2025 Report to the Community** – Come enjoy breakfast, inspiring stories, and hands-on demos that show how Durham County Cooperative Extension staff are making a difference in our community every day at the Extension's annual "Report to the Community." This event will be held at the Extension office, 721 Foster Street, from 8:30-10:30 a.m. on Thursday, May 22.
6. **Engagement Opportunities with Staff on New UDO** – The Durham City-County Planning Department begins its next round of community engagement regarding the new Unified Development Ordinance with the following events: Engagement Sessions: Thursday, May 22, 6-7:30 p.m. Staff-led virtual engagement session Registration link: www.bit.ly/VirtualUDO; Thursday, May 29, 6-7:30 p.m. Staff-led in-person engagement session (at W.G. Pearson Auditorium: 600 E Umstead St) www.bit.ly/InPersonUDO; and Tuesday, June 3, 6-7:30 p.m. Virtual Q&A with Code Studio www.bit.ly/CodeConnect4. More information at www.engagedurham.com/UDOEngage.
7. **Memorial Day Remembrance Event on May 26** – The Durham County Veteran Services Department invites the Durham community to its annual Memorial Day Remembrance Event on Monday, May 26, at 9 a.m. The event will be held at 201 E. Main Street, in the Administration II Building, Conference Room 126. The keynote speaker is Army Veteran and Board member Stephen J. Valentine. Veteran Services staff want to honor all of Durham County's Gold Star Families at the event. If you are interested, please reach out to 919-560-8387 or veteranservices@dconc.gov.
8. **Opioid Settle Annual Community Meeting** – Learn more about how Durham is using its opioid settlement funds to address the opioid epidemic and give your input. This event takes place on Thursday, June 5th from 5:30pm – 7pm in the Commissioner Chambers located at 200 E. Main Street, 2nd Floor. Please contact Jaeson Smith at jaesonsmith@dconc.gov for addition information.
9. **BULLS Academy Cohort 12 Info Session** – Open enrollment for Cohort 12 of the BULLS Academy is now open but you must first attend an information session to obtain an application. Information sessions are held via zoom on Wednesday, May 14 at 12pm; Wednesday, May 28 at 12pm and June 11 at 12pm. Applications for Cohort 12 will close on June 22, 2025. Please visit <https://www.madeindurham.org/bulls-academy> for more information.

10. **Laurel Street Apartments Accepting Applications** - The LSA+ property management division of Laurel Street will start accepting applications for initial tenants on Thursday, May 15th at the Durham Bottling Company located at 506 Ramseur Street between 11am – 3pm. Please visit <https://www.renegadedurham.com/apartments/nc/durham/apply> for more information.

Commissioner Jacobs stated the Laurel Street Apartment project started in 2017 as a parking deck and after North Carolina Legislation allowed Counties to build housing, the project was changed to a mixed-use development that also included affordable housing. She thanked County staff and the commitment of the Board of County Commissioners for the redevelopment.

Commissioner Burton thanked Sharon Davis, Register of Deeds, for a personal tour of the Register of Deeds Office and the archives room.

Minutes

Vice Chair Lee moved, seconded by Commissioner Valentine to approve the April 28, 2025 Regular Session minutes and the amended March 10, 2025 Regular Session minutes including additional reports from Commissioner Jacobs.

The motion carried unanimously.

Ceremonial Items

25-0206 Proclamation – Emergency Medical Services Week

Commissioner Burton read the following proclamation:

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES WEEK PROCLAMATION | 2025

- WHEREAS,** emergency medical services is a vital and essential public service in Durham County; and
- WHEREAS,** the members of emergency medical services team are ready to provide lifesaving care to those in need 24 hours a day, seven days a week; and
- WHEREAS,** access to quality emergency care dramatically improves the survival and recovery rate of those who experience sudden illness or injury; and
- WHEREAS,** emergency medical services fills healthcare gaps by providing important, out-of-hospital care, including preventative medicine and follow-up care through our community paramedics; and
- WHEREAS,** the emergency medical services system consists of first responders, emergency medical technicians, advanced emergency medical technicians, paramedics, community paramedics, 911 telecommunicators, firefighters, police officers, educators, administrators, emergency nurses, pre-hospital nurses, emergency physicians, trained members of the public, and other out-of-hospital medical care providers; and

WHEREAS, the members of emergency medical services teams, whether career or volunteer, engage in thousands of hours of specialized training and continuing education to enhance their patient care and lifesaving skills; and

WHEREAS, it is appropriate to recognize the value and the accomplishments of emergency medical services providers in the Durham County emergency medical services system by designating Emergency Medical Services Week.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Nida Allam, Chair and on behalf of the Durham Board of County Commissioners, do hereby proclaim May 18 – 24, 2025, as

“EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES WEEK”

in Durham County and recognizing 2025 is the 51st anniversary of EMS Week, call upon all citizens to join with us in recognizing the vital and essential services provided by members of the Durham County emergency medical services system to care for our residents and visitors.

This 12th day of May 2025.

Nida Allam, Chair
Durham Board of County Commissioners

Gordon Smith, OES-EMS Deputy Chief for Operations shared EMS Week was recognized in 1974 and 2025 was the 51st Anniversary – while Durham County was celebrating 50 years of the EMS Department. Mr. Smith shared a brief overview of the services and programs offered by EMS and thanked the Board for the proclamation.

The Board thanked Mr. Smith and the EMS Department for providing Durham residents with vital care and services.

25-0267 Resolution Honoring the Life and Career of Durham County EMS Lieutenant Kevin M. O’Connor

Vice Chair Lee read the following resolution:

LIEUTENANT KEVIN M. O’CONNOR

WHEREAS, Durham County Emergency Medical Services Lieutenant Kevin M. O’Connor passed away on Monday, April 28, 2025; and

WHEREAS, Lieutenant O’Connor began his Durham County career on November 27, 2000, and faithfully served Durham County Emergency Medical Services for nearly 25 years; and

WHEREAS, Lieutenant O’Connor held numerous roles including Advanced Emergency Medical Technician, Paramedic, Field Training Officer, Senior Paramedic, and District Supervisor; and

WHEREAS, Lieutenant O’Connor served for two decades as a member of the Durham Police Department’s Selective Enforcement Team, contributing to the safety and security of our citizens and officers during high-risk law enforcement operations; and

WHEREAS, Lieutenant O'Connor was admired and respected by colleagues for his skill, calm demeanor, dedication, and kindness; and

WHEREAS, we pause to honor the life and service of Lieutenant Kevin M. O'Connor who dedicated his career to serving the Durham County community for nearly 25 years.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that we, the members of the Durham County Board of Commissioners, do hereby resolve to pay tribute to

LIEUTENANT KEVIN M. O'CONNOR

A kind and compassionate man who made a difference in caring for others and serving this community with dedication and pride. We call upon the citizens of Durham County to pause and reflect on his distinguished service. We further direct that all flags at Durham County buildings be flown at half-staff on Thursday, May 15, 2025, the date of Lt. O'Connor's memorial service.

This the 12th day of May 2025.

Nida Allam, Chair

Dr. Mike Lee, Vice Chair

Michelle Burton, Commissioner

Wendy Jacobs, Commissioner

Stephen Valentine, Commissioner

Gordon Smith, EMS Deputy Chief, thanked the Board for the resolution and stated Mr. O'Connor's mother and sisters were in attendance.

The Board thanked Mr. O'Connor's family for sharing him with Durham County for 25 years.

25-0217 Resolution – Memorial Day 2025

Commissioner Valentine read the following resolution:

MEMORIAL DAY 2025

WHEREAS, Memorial Day each year serves as a solemn reminder of the scourge of war and its bitter aftermath of sorrow; and

WHEREAS, on Memorial Day, America undertakes its solemn duty to remember the courageous men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice in defense of our nation and the cause of freedom around the world; and

WHEREAS, on May 5, 1868, Major General John A. Logan established Decoration Day as a time to decorate the graves of war dead with flowers; and

WHEREAS, in 1971, the US Congress declared Memorial Day a federal holiday and decreed that it be observed on the last Monday of each May; and

WHEREAS, as we honor those who have died in our Nation’s service so that war might end, we understand and appreciate the values of patriotism, citizenship, commitment, honor and duty; and

WHEREAS, we must pledge to never forget the names of the 375 known soldiers, sailors, Marines, airmen and airwomen of Durham County who gave the ultimate sacrifice in defending our freedoms.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Durham Board of County Commissioners hereby resolve May 26, 2025 as Memorial Day in Durham County. We urge all citizens to observe Memorial Day 2025 by displaying respect and gratitude for our veterans, both living and deceased, participating in remembrance ceremonies, and observing a moment of silence at 3 p.m. during the National Moment of Remembrance.

This the 12th day of May 2025.

Nida Allam, Chair

Dr. Mike Lee, Vice Chair

Michelle Burton, Commissioner

Wendy Jacobs, Commissioner

Stephen Valentine, Commissioner

Tammie Hall, Assistant County Manager introduced Linzie Atkins as the Interim Director of Veteran Services. Mr. Atkins thanked the Board for pausing to remember the Veterans who lost their lives for the freedom of America and asked residents to pause at 3 p.m. on May 26th. Jonathan Crooms, Veteran Services Officer, stated Durham County would celebrate the Memorial Day Remembrance Event on Monday, May 26th at 9 a.m. in Conference Room 126 in Administrative Building II. He invited residents to attend to help read the 376 Veteran names and highlighted that Commissioner Valentine would be the keynote speaker. Hellen Juarez-Ruize, Veteran Services Officer thanked the Board for not allowing the erasing of government history. Kwame Hester, Veteran Services Officer, stated that deceased Veterans, living Veterans and Gold Star Family members would be honored on Memorial Day.

The Board thanked the Veteran Services Department for providing services, programs and honoring the Veterans in the Durham community.

25-0251 Proclamation for Mental Health Awareness Month

Commissioner Jacobs read the following proclamation:

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH | 2025

WHEREAS, mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act, and helps determine how we handle stress, make choices, and our ability to build relationships; and

WHEREAS, the National Institute of Health reports that nearly one-in-five adults live with a mental illness - affecting people of all ages, races, ethnicities and socioeconomic backgrounds - the emphasis of taking care of ourselves should be the norm rather than the exception, and

WHEREAS, there are on-going efforts and initiatives in Durham to identify the resources and gaps in services at each intercept in the Sequential Intercept Model to divert individuals with mental illness and substance use disorders away from detention through innovative strategies, and

WHEREAS, the use of peer support plays a crucial role in mental health by providing individuals with a sense of community and understanding that can lead to improved wellbeing, reduced isolation and increased self-esteem, and

WHEREAS, we strive to address individuals with complex behavioral health needs who frequently cycle through jails, homeless shelters, emergency departments and other local crisis services, with an awareness that feelings of personal shame and fears of social stigma and discrimination can be reduced by increasing the community awareness of mental illness and available resources, and

WHEREAS, we strive to partner with agencies within the Durham community to combine resources, skills and expertise that will increase access to treatment and resources that will support our citizens as they seek to improve their mental health; and

WHEREAS, we know that with early and consistent treatment, people with serious mental illness can manage their condition, overcome challenges and lead meaningful, productive lives; and

WHEREAS, we strive to improve public safety, reduce recidivism and improve the quality of life for citizens in the justice system experiencing symptoms of mental illness by offering specialty courts and programs such as Jail Mental Health Services and Jail Transitions to ensure continuity of care.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Nida Allam, Chair and on behalf of the Durham Board of County Commissioners, do hereby proclaim May 2025 as

“MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH”

in Durham County, North Carolina, and call on all citizens, government agencies, public and private institutions, businesses, churches and schools to come together to promote awareness and understanding of mental health, reduce stigma and recognize the necessity of accessible and appropriate mental health services for all citizens of Durham County.

This 12th day of May 2025.

Nida Allam, Chair
Durham Board of County Commissioners

Roshanna Parker, Justice Services Department Director thanked the Board for their continued support of mental illness and mental health awareness. Renee Shaw, Program Manager, shared an overview of activities planned for the month of May to celebrate Mental Health Awareness Month. Marc Strange, Clinical Services Manager, gave a brief overview of services and programs offered to residents in the community.

The Board thanked the Justice Services Department for being a national leader with mental health awareness.

25-0253 Proclamation – Treatment Court Month

Chair Allam read the following proclamation:

TREATMENT COURT MONTH | 2025

WHEREAS, treatment courts have been restoring lives and families for more than three decades; and

WHEREAS, Durham County has two active treatment courts devoted to serving citizens with substance use and mental health disorders; and

WHEREAS, according to All Rise, treatment courts are the most successful justice system intervention in our nation’s history for reducing crime by addressing substance use and mental health disorders; and

WHEREAS, treatment courts save an average of more than \$6,000 for every individual they serve and provide a range of economic benefits to a community, such as reduced costs in court and prison expenditures, increased tax revenues, lowered foster care expenses, and decreased costs related to victimization; and

WHEREAS, treatment courts combine accountability with evidence-based treatment and annually refer more than 150,000 people to lifesaving treatment and recovery support services; and

WHEREAS, according to All Rise, treatment courts significantly improve substance use and mental health disorder treatment outcomes and prevent fatal overdoses; and

WHEREAS, treatment courts facilitate community-wide partnerships, bringing together public safety and public health; and

WHEREAS, there are now more than 4,000 treatment courts nationwide and treatment courts demonstrate that when one person rises, we all rise.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Nida Allam, Chair and on behalf of the Durham Board of County Commissioners, do hereby proclaim May 2025 as

“TREATMENT COURT MONTH”

in Durham County, North Carolina, and urge all citizens to join in recognizing how important it is to assist justice involved individuals struggling with addiction and/or mental health issues to gain access to the treatment resources necessary to make substantive changes in their lives.

This 12th day of May 2025.

Nida Allam, Chair
Durham Board of County Commissioners

Roshanna Parker, Justice Services Department Director thanked the Board for supporting the Treatment Court for Durham residents. Lentora Dunccan, Recovery Court Coordinator stated the Justice Services

Department changed the name from Treatment Court to Recovery Court and shared an overview of the programs and services offered.

The Board thanked the Justice Services Department and Recovery Court for providing vital services and programs to residents in the community.

Other Business

25-0256 FY 2025-26 Manager's Recommended Budget Presentation

County Manager Claudia Hager Shared the “2025-2026 County Manger’s Recommended Budget” and provided the following summary:

Good evening, Chair Allam, members of the Board, County staff, and residents. It is an honor to present to you my 1st recommended budget for fiscal year 2025-26.

This proposed budget is a delicate balancing act between limited resources, resident economic stress, and nearly infinite needs. It is also the result of thousands of hours of work across all departments, shared city and county agencies, and a significant number of partner agencies that support vital goals. So, to all employees and partner agencies that helped with this process, you have my deepest appreciation!

As every Board meeting will show, the County is working in many different areas. One meeting may include an agenda item about the future of the Research Triangle Park, while the next item may see an impassioned discussion of the critical needs around affordable housing. Another might be explaining the revaluation process or discussing support for food insecurity. Such a varied Board meeting reflects the many priorities of the Board and residents, as well as the complexities of supporting close to 30 different agencies that provide a myriad of services and programs.

A shifting landscape of resources and needs provided the catalyst for the County's renewed strategic plan. Limited resources, competing with a growing population, means the County must focus on the guidance and data, that comes from the DCO Forward 2029 strategic plan. We must use that information as a blueprint, for how to achieve a better future, regardless of any obstacles.

Durham County has been fortunate to have a strong economy, but the past is no guarantee of the future. The current fiscal environment has its uncertainties. As a result, the key priorities built into this recommended budget are focused on providing the best outcomes.

Given the current economic climate, maintaining the County's fiscal stability remains my foremost priority. Simultaneously, we must provide robust public safety services to our growing population while creating comprehensive educational and workforce opportunities for all residents, with Durham Public Schools as the cornerstone of these efforts. All additional priorities must be evaluated through the lens of long-term financial stability and affordability.

Every year, fiscal strength and fiscal stress balance precariously between the competing needs for revenue and expenditure growth. The budget process generally tries to move the scales towards fiscal strength, through prudent revenue projections, while also supporting sustainable expenditure growth through strategic choices.

The unpredictability of budget development comes from predicting the future with limited data. In turn, that variability — between prediction and reality — can quickly swing the scales back towards fiscal stress.

And indeed, this is what happened last year, and more concerning, in the current fiscal year. The actual revenue collection compared to estimated collection has not been as strong as initially predicted. For two

years running, revenue sources have slowed or have even decreased. These new fiscal realities require a shift in the organization's expenditure growth to align with projected revenues.

A view of revenue changes shows growth in property tax revenue, before any property tax rate increase, of nearly \$18 million for the General Fund and the Capital Financing Fund, continuing a trend of annual strong “natural growth” of property tax.

However, when looking at other major revenues, the growth is significantly lower, with a number of key revenues, decreasing, year over year. General Fund sales tax growth, decreases, over a million dollars, while several other revenue sources are also seeing a reduction.

These key revenue sources and their natural growth, support many “built in” costs. Without higher annual natural growth in revenue sources, the County must raise the property tax rate to collect more revenue, or slow expenditure growth, or a combination of both options.

January 2025 saw new County valuations for all real property. This valuation change equates to a 60% increase in total property valuation. Durham is truly a popular place to live. This valuation increase is offset by a corresponding “revenue neutral” property tax rate decrease, down from 79.87 cents to 51.92 cents. This “revenue neutral” rate is in accordance with state law, but the County is still allowed to approve a tax rate increase on top of the revenue neutral rate.

Where possible, I have tried to limit property tax rate increases and their impact on residents. We do this by maximizing efficiencies and limiting the expansion of services to areas that provide the highest return on investment for all residents. But when slowing growth in other revenue sources, competes, with higher service demand or higher costs, the options to fill those gaps are limited to property tax increases.

With those realities, I am proposing a 3.5-cent property tax rate increase for this recommended budget. This increase will add \$30 million in new revenue to support education, meet increased service demands in key mandated areas, address talent retention, provide funding for aging facilities, capital projects, and ongoing debt service needs.

We budget property tax revenue in two areas - one to support the General Fund and the other to support the Capital Financing Fund, which pays for capital projects and debt service.

Please note the middle column, which shows the “revenue neutral” rate, related to the revaluation process, and the recommended tax rate to the right, which shows a 3.5 cent total tax rate increase.

I would like to remind the Board and residents that the property tax rate is the primary revenue source controllable by the Board. And, it is the only significant way to raise additional revenue. Future tax rate increases may also be needed to support ongoing County goals, including our significant commitment to Durham Public Schools, capital planning, and other priorities.

Revaluation affected all other Durham County tax districts with a corresponding “revenue-neutral” property tax rate. Most, of the fire districts are requesting a tax rate increase for increased personnel costs, equipment replacement, and vehicle purchases. The RTP Special Park District is increasing the property tax rate for both of its Funds, to continue supporting area development, improvements to the Park Trail System, and to plan for future investment needs.

Sales tax revenue is our second-largest revenue source and is dependent on economic activity. Sales tax revenue for next fiscal year is projected at \$130 million. For perspective, this is the equivalent to 15 cents, of property tax revenue.

Coming off unprecedented revenue growth after the pandemic, last year and the current fiscal year have seen dramatically slower growth. In fact, we are collecting approximately 7.5 percent less revenue, this year, compared to the same period, the year before. This decrease in actual sales tax revenue collection is driving a lower forecasted amount for next year.

The effect of slower sales tax growth can clearly be seen here. For three years, sales tax revenue grew by over \$11 million, with FY 2023-24 seeing close to \$22 million in new growth. That growth in revenue funded a host of high priority County needs, before adding any pressure to increase the property tax rate.

But, last year saw a tremendous slowdown in sales tax revenue growth, while the upcoming fiscal year is expected to retract based on current year patterns. Remember, sales tax revenue is the County's `second-largest revenue source. We will continue to watch the sales tax patterns carefully as we navigate the current fiscal climate. It is also essential to recognize some other revenue trends for the upcoming year.

While we are projecting increases in investment revenue and Medicaid hold harmless, decreased projected revenues occur for EMS patient fees. We are also projecting a slight decrease in Register of Deeds fees due to higher interest rates, slower home buying, and limited housing inventory.

The allocation for fund balance will need to be reduced to align with the projected revenue and expenditure trends, and to ensure reserves are maintained at levels that keep the County in a sound fiscal position. These decreasing revenue factors contribute to the limited growth of the expenditure budget.

While the General Fund is where the vast majority of activity and spending occurs, there are a number of other funds that serve specific County purposes. These include the already mentioned special tax district funds, the Debt Service fund, and our Sewer Utility fund. The total County budget, including all of these funds, increases 7.4% to over \$1 billion. The General Fund budget, a subset of that total amount, increases 5.6% to a little over \$688 million.

Slower revenue growth presents a challenge, but when combined with spending adjustments, it creates potentially significant budget imbalances. This budget process started with over \$55 million in expenditure requests above projected revenues.

As in prior years, education remains a high funding priority, and to that end, I am recommending a Durham Public Schools funding increase of over \$10 million.

Equally important are Durham County Government's hardworking employees, with funds budgeted to support a merit pay increase for employees who meet or exceed performance goals. Additionally, \$6.3 million supports the increased cost of employee benefits.

These three spending categories alone, exceed the natural revenue growth shown on the previous slides.

Other areas of funding increase include new position costs to address increased service demands. This budget also maintains ongoing support for many important community initiatives while managing inflationary pressures.

Historically, new position growth within the County has been significant. New positions reflect growing needs pushed by an increasing population and are funded with additional revenue. However, I have limited position growth, understanding that increasing efficiency is valuable and necessary as revenue growth slows. In the current year, 9 vacant positions were delimited in that effort. I would like to thank departments for their efforts to realign and adjust operations to meet this goal. Next year, I am recommending 44.5 new positions but offsetting that growth by reallocating 33 vacant positions. Overall, the County has 11.2 new FTEs recommended for next year.

The County's commitment to education continues to be unwavering. The recommended budget, while recognizing the many needs of Durham Public Schools, supports an additional \$10.3 million for Current Expense funding, bringing, total DPS support to almost \$224 million, a 4% increase.

Per pupil funding for next year, increases \$128 to \$5,496 per student, keeping Durham in the top 5 funded school districts, across the state. DPS continues to be the single largest expenditure for Durham County Government at 1/3rd of the entire General Fund budget.

The County also provides approximately \$77 million in additional indirect support for DPS through a number of different departments and programs, the largest of which is annual debt service payments for school buildings.

With this appropriation, Durham Public Schools' annual County funding will have increased by \$35 million over the last two years and nearly \$70 million over the last five years. While we have made substantial progress with these funds, I am aware of the remaining funding gaps within the district.

One area of concern is the funding required for deferred maintenance, repairs, and renovations. In the coming months, I will collaborate with DPS leadership to identify potential funds to address some of the most urgent needs, before a potential bond referendum. This budget will allocate an additional \$10 million in the Capital Improvement Plan to address pressing needs that cannot be met through the current bond funding, lottery funds, or the ARPA funding allocated in FY 2025. This approach has been used in previous years to bridge one-time capital infrastructure gaps while planning for future bonds or addressing time-sensitive repair and renovation projects.

Durham County demonstrates its commitment to education and workforce development through robust support for Durham Technical Community College. DTCC offers diverse educational pathways, skills development, and specialized training, while serving as a critical partner in providing market-responsive training programs that support economic upward mobility for our residents.

Recognizing the County's fiscal limitations, DTCC leadership submitted a maintenance budget. The recommended budget includes a 1.5 percent increase in total funding for the institution. Notably, \$2.1 million of County funding allocated to DTCC is specifically designated for Durham student scholarships, financed through dedicated sales tax revenue. And as with DPS, County Leadership will continue planning and coordinating on CIP projects in the upcoming months.

As our County population continues to grow, so does our need for increased Public Safety services. For this reason, the majority of new positions I am recommending are related to public safety.

Included are 5 new Law Enforcement Officer positions for the Sheriff's Office, in part to provide additional coverage to a growing population base in the RTP. These position increases, achieved from position realignments, will also impact the overall available Law Enforcement Officers to address public safety concerns in unincorporated areas of the County. This workforce enhancement, delivers dual benefits: faster response times in the high-demand RTP area and improved service throughout the county, as resources are distributed more effectively.

I am also recommending additional funding for the Sheriff's Logistic division, and an increase in inmate welfare fund spending, to cover items for people who are housed in the Durham County Detention Facility.

Population growth is increasing the number and complexity of EMS calls for service. Therefore, I am recommending 12 additional paramedic and EMT positions, which will improve shift coverage, reduce provider workload, and increase ambulance availability.

I am also recommending an Emergency Management Deputy Chief, to assist in efforts to prepare for, respond to, and recover from hazards in both Durham County and the City of Durham. Lastly, I am recommending the replacement of eight vehicles, including five ambulances.

The Youth Home is entering its third and final expansion phase, which will require an additional 8.5 full-time employees. This facility provides an important option for court-appointed juvenile offenders to be placed within their county of residence, rather than being sent elsewhere.

The modern building serves dual purposes. First, it houses Durham County juveniles locally, keeping them connected to their community. Second, it contains the newly opened Resources for Youth Success and Empowerment (RYSE) center. RYSE supports families with youth ages 10-17 by providing essential tools to address behavioral and mental health challenges. As a community-focused initiative, the RYSE Assessment Center connects young people and their families with Durham County's comprehensive support network.

Although most new recommended positions fall within the Community Safety focus area, we also need additional staff to meet the growing demand for County services across departments.

Our Information Services & Technology (IS&T) department requires seven new positions, with five specifically dedicated to implementing a new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system. This ERP software solution will centralize and streamline our core business operations. Our current system, while still functional, is over 20 years old and approaching the end of technical support from the vendor. These new positions will be crucial for ensuring an efficient transition to the new ERP platform.

Additional recommended positions in General Services, Community Intervention, Elections, and other departments address increased workload and compliance requirements. To manage county growth, we'll offset these new positions by reallocating 33 vacant positions.

A key initiative is expanding Project BUILD, our comprehensive gang intervention program. Currently serving ages 14-21, we'll extend these services to youth ages 10-13, as research shows risk factors for gang involvement emerge as early as elementary school. This expansion requires three additional outreach workers, allowing us to provide case management and direct outreach to youth while strengthening our partnership with Durham Public Schools.

The County's investments in the RYSE Assessment Center at the Youth Home and an expanded Project Build initiative create a stronger support system for Durham families and youth.

I would like to point out two fee increases that are worth highlighting. With a significant number of major water & sewer capital projects planned in and around the RTP, and user fees supporting those costs, the Sewer Utility monthly consumption rate is recommended to increase 12%.

I am also following the recommendations of the Stormwater Plan presented several years ago by including an increase in the Stormwater Utility Fee – the Fund's primary revenue source – from \$80 to \$96 per Equivalent Residential Unit. This increased revenue will cover the cost of complying with the Falls Lake and Jordan Lake state requirements.

Employee benefits, particularly healthcare, represent a critical component of our compensation package. Across the nation, governments, private sector entities and others are grappling with the rising cost of health care insurance and evaluating approaches to reduce expenses.

To contain costs, a competitive Request For Proposal (RFP) process was carried out in the current year to limit plan cost growth. Next year's budget requires an additional \$6.2 million to support increased health

care plan expenses.

During the upcoming year, we will conduct enhanced analysis of benefits to evaluate the level of healthcare coverage the County can sustainably support over the long term.

I want to share some key dates so you can mark your calendars!

Tuesday, May 27th, the Board will hold a Public Hearing where residents will have the opportunity to speak on the proposed budget. There are also other opportunities to provide feedback that can be found on the County's website.

Budget work sessions will begin on Tuesday, May 20th with additional work sessions scheduled for May 22nd, May 29th, and June 3rd. If needed, an additional work session will occur on June 5th. Budget adoption is planned for Monday, June 9th.

In an effort to engage the public, particularly our youth, we held a contest where we asked our young residents to design the budget document cover art that represents their favorite Durham things. I am delighted to announce that our winner is Zora Williams! Zora is 12 and attends Rogers-Herr Middle School. An artist at heart, Zora has a special love for painting as her favorite way to bring her ideas to life. Her submission includes many of the places that make up her fondest memories in Durham. Thank you, Zora, for your beautiful submission!

We will have a special recognition for Zora at the June 9 board meeting, when the budget is approved.

Guiding our organization through the current fiscal climate presents a significant challenge. We must make decisions that avoid creating burdens on our residents, and we must make sustainable decisions that provide services regardless of the current environment. I want to caution both residents and the Board that we will likely face a growing gap between resources and needs over the next several years.

However, I remain confident that by focusing on core services, evaluating approaches to increase organizational efficiency, and maintaining fiscal discipline, we can weather future volatility while preserving what makes Durham such a fantastic and desirable place to live.

I look forward to the Board's deliberations on this recommended budget. Our staff and I will be at your service to answer questions, explain our vision, describe the limitations of some choices versus others, and provide data that helps every Commissioner feel confident when voting to approve a FY 2025-26 budget.

Again, I want to acknowledge the Executive Leadership Team, Department Heads, and staff for their support throughout this process. Most importantly, I would like to acknowledge the Budget and Management Services Department staff. Keith Lane, thank you for your leadership and for helping us get to this phase in the process.

The link to this presentation and other budget document materials can be found on our website at DCONC.GOV

Thank you.

The Board thanked County Manager Hager for the Recommended Budget Presentation.

Consent Agenda

Chair Allam asked the Board if they requested to pull or comment on any items on the Consent Agenda.

Commissioner Jacobs requested staff to comment on Items 25-0270 and 25-0271

- Item 25-0270 – Raina Goldstein, County Food Security Coordinator stated the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) was the nation's largest and most impactful federally funded nutrition program that served 33,000 Durham County residents. Latoya Chambers, Assistant Director of Family Economic Independence stated federal budget cuts to SNAP would affect the 12 percent of food-insecure residents in Durham and most recipients were employed. Kelly Warnock, Nutrition Program Manager stated budget cuts to SNAP would affect the local economy, increase healthcare, Medicaid costs and overburden strained food pantries.

The Board thanked Commissioner Jacobs for the letter and asked residents to contact Senator Thom Tillis, Senator Ted Budd and Congresswoman Valerie Foushee. Commissioner Jacobs asked the Clerk to send the support letter to the Federal and State Delegations and Kevin Leonard, Executive Director, North Carolina Association of County Commissioners, on the Commissioner's letterhead with pictures and signatures.

- Item 25-0271– Cynthia Cason, Assistant Director, Department of Social Services stated 17,000 Durham residents were enrolled in Medicaid Expansion. She added North Carolina was included in a "trigger law" that would revert Medicaid expansion if federal matching funds dropped below 90 percent of costs for those covered under the expansion. Ms. Cason stated 92 percent of the Medicaid Expansion enrolled were employed individuals, children, elderly or disabled people.

The Board thanked Ms. Cason and the Department of Social Services for enrolling residents in Medicaid Expansion effectively and efficiently.

Directive: Commissioner Jacobs requested the Clerk to send the support letter for SNAP to Federal, State Delegation and Kevin Leonard, Executive Director, North Carolina Association of County Commissioners. on the Commissioner's letterhead with pictures and signatures.

Hearing no additional comments, Chair Allam entertained a motion for approval.

Commissioner Valentine moved, seconded by Vice Chair Lee to approve the following items on the Consent Agenda.

The motion carried unanimously.

25-0176 Letter of Support for Application for Clean Water Act Section 319(h) Grant

25-0177 Approve Membership Agreement Memorandum of Understanding in the amount of \$3,537 with the Clean Water Education Partnership (CWEP)

25-0201 Authorize the County Manager to Execute a Contract with Design Workshop, Inc., for Framework Planning Design Services, Including Community Engagement Services, for the Orange Factory Road Nature Preserve and Farm Campus Totaling an Amount Not-To-Exceed \$295,658.00

25-0211 Authorize the County Manager to execute a contract amendment for radio tower design services in the amount of \$136,304 with O'Brien Atkins Architects, for a total revised contract amount not to exceed \$4,956,814 for the Emergency Operations Center, Backup 911, and Sheriff's Backup Call Center

25-0225 Approval of the FY25 Durham Transit Plan Q4 Work Program Amendment in the amount of \$158,000.00

25-0227 Approval of the Final Recommended FY26 Durham Annual Transit Work Program

25-0243 Approve the Proposed City-County Planning Department FY26 Work Program

25-0248 Approval of Durham County Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (JCPC) Local Funding Plan Recommendation for FY 2025-2026

25-0249 Approval to Allow the County Manager to Enter into a Service Contract with Sunland Fire Protection, Inc. to Remove and Install New Fire Pump and Control Panel at the Durham County Detention Center in the amount of \$266,985.00

25-0250 Approval to Allow the County Manager to Enter into a Contract with Pipe Techs Plumbing, LLC to Removal and Installation Backflow Preventers at the Durham County Detention Center in the Amount of \$122,359.00

25-0252 Transfer of \$18,000 Between Approved ARPA Awards from Knox Street Studios to Forward Cities to Provide Additional Small Business Counseling Services

25-0258 Approval of Interlocal Agreement between Durham County, Orange County, and the Town of Chapel Hill related to Durham County administering the billing and collection of the Solid Waste Program Fee for property located within the Town of Chapel Hill but lying within the limits of Durham County

25-0261 Approval of Closed Session Minutes

25-0270 Approval of a Support Letter for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

25-0271 Approval of a Support Letter for the Medicaid Program

Public Hearings

Public Hearing - TC2400003: A Privately Initiated Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) Text Amendment

Robin Schultze, Principal Planner stated the Board was requested to conduct a public hearing on Text Amendment TC2400003, a privately initiated request to amend Section 3.26, Statutory Development Agreement, of the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO), in order to allow flexibility within the limitations imposed upon statutory development agreements.

Chair Allam opened the public hearing.

Nil Ghosh, Partner with Morningstar Law Group and Representing Applicant

Mr. Ghosh stated he was representing Lincoln Avenue Communities, LLC, the applicant. He added the proposal to revise the UDO supported the commitment to affordable housing and there were no exceptions to the environmental requirements within Article 4, Zoning Districts; and Article 8, Environmental Protection. Mr. Ghosh stated the requirements placed a burden on the development of small lots such as the one owned by the applicant when the desire was to commit to affordable housing. He added if the

proposal was adopted, developers would be able to make exceptions to the environmental requirements if there was a commitment to needed affordable housing. Mr. Ghosh stated development agreements were new to Durham and only three development agreements were approved for projects for affordable housing.

Donna Stainback, Citizen

Ms. Stainback stated there was significant and frequent development in southeast Durham and she did not support the text amendment.

Pam Andrews, Citizen

Ms. Andrews stated settlement pollution was impacting southeast Durham's waterways due to overdevelopment and fewer trees, and she did not support the text amendment.

Tammie Sawaya, Citizen

Ms. Sawaya stated Durham should not approve any massive sprawling annexing and she did not support the text amendment.

The Board inquired about the tree canopy limit with affordable housing. Mr. Schultze responded the tree canopy decreased the amount of buildable space and affordable housing units. Mr. Ghosh added the property was next to non-residential zoning which required a larger buffer. He stated affordable housing required 1.75 parking spots per unit and most of the seven acres would be used for parking to build 160 units on the property. Mr. Ghosh stated the applicant wanted to change the parcel to a compact neighborhood tier to meet the tree coverage. The Board stated the UDO was approved by City Council. Mr. Ghosh replied that City Council approved the text amendment, rezoning and development agreement.

The Board asked about the Board of Adjustment solution for the project. Mr. Ghosh replied a variance was a difficult threshold to meet and not an equivalent solution. He added the project would not achieve the variance. The Board asked if the City and County maintained consistent text amendments. Mr. Shultz responded yes; the City and County maintained consistent text amendments. The Board inquired about the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Program (LIHTC). Mr. Ghosh responded that the LIHTC requirements focused on the quality of life at the facility, not zoning. He added the requirements included parking, green space, accessibility and amenities. Mr. Ghosh stated the project was not using public funds.

Chair Allam closed the public hearing.

Motion 1:

Commissioner Jacobs moved, seconded by Commissioner Burton to adopt an ordinance amending the Unified Development Ordinance, incorporating revisions to Article 3 Applications and Permits.

Ayes: Chair Allam, Commissioner Burton and Commissioner Jacobs

Nays: Vice Chair Lee and Commissioner Valentine

The motion carried.

Motion 2:

Commissioner Burton moved, seconded by Commissioner Jacobs to adopt a

Consistency Statement as required by N.C.G.S. Sec 160-D605.

Ayes: Chair Allam, Commissioner Burton and Commissioner Jacobs

Nays: Vice Chair Lee and Commissioner Valentine

The motion carried.

Commissioner Valentine moved, seconded by Vice Chair Lee to extend the meeting until 11:30 p.m.

The motion carried unanimously.

Public Hearing – Zoning Map Change – East Club At 85

Peyton Burgess, Senior Planner stated that the Board was requested to conduct a public hearing on the Zoning Map Change East Club at 85 (Z2400032).

Ms. Burgess shared the *Z2400032 – E Club at 85* presentation which highlighted the following: Case Summary, Zoning Context Map, Aerial Map, Place Type Map, Summary of Commitments, 2019 Eno-Hope Wildlife Corridor, Summary of Community Input and Staff Determination.

Chair Allam opened the public hearing.

Nil Ghosh, Partner with Morningstar Law Group and Representing Applicant

Mr. Ghosh stated he was representing the applicant and proposed changing the zoning designation of seven parcels of land totaling 13.96 acres located along East Club Boulevard just east of I-85. He added that the zoning was Residential Rural and Commercial Neighborhood. Mr. Ghosh proposed changing the designation to Commercial General with a textual development plan to allow most by-right uses as defined in the UDO with exclusions.

The Board asked if the parcels would not be used for high-intensity use, due to egress and ingress. Mr. Ghosh replied no; adding the property was on City water, with no sewer and no plans to expand utilities. The Board asked if the property could be used for a convenience store/gas station. Mr. Ghosh responded a convenience store/gas station would be added to the prohibited use list. The Board questioned if staff was inclusive for the parcels to be transit opportunity oriented. Scott Whiteman, Senior Planning Manager replied the area was transit opportunity oriented and a new bus route was scheduled to be added to the area. The Board inquired about what could be built on the property if the parcels were Transit-Oriented Development (TOA). Mr. Whiteman responded that the design plan would determine what could be built on the property, but perhaps a small commercial building and a small multifamily building.

Chair Allam closed the public hearing.

Motion 1:

Commissioner Jacobs moved, seconded by Commissioner Burton to adopt an

ordinance amending the Unified Development Ordinance by taking property out of the Residential Rural and Commercial Neighborhood, Falls/Jordan Watershed Overlay District B, Major Transportation Corridor I-85, and establishing the same as Commercial General with a Textual Development plan, Falls/Jordan Watershed Overlay District B, Major Transportation Corridor I-85.

The motion carried unanimously.

Motion 2:

Commissioner Burton moved, seconded by Commissioner Jacobs to adopt a Consistency Statement as required by N.C.G.S. Sec 160-D605.

The motion carried unanimously.

Public Hearing – Page/Miami Design District Text Amendment to the Unified Development Ordinance - This text amendment is proposed in conjunction with the staff initiated zoning map change for the area southeast of Research Triangle Park (RTP) between NC Highway 54, Davis Drive, Hopson Road, Page Road, and South Miami Boulevard to encourage multimodal transit-oriented development and support future publicly funded transportation projects

Kayla Seibel, Senior Planner stated the Board was requested to conduct a public hearing and if appropriate, approve the text amendment to the *Unified Development Ordinance*. She added the Page/Miami Design District was the next application for the Compact Suburban Design District after being established alongside the Patterson Place Design District in 2019. Ms. Seibel stated after looking at the Page/Miami area in context, staff initiated two technical text amendments for clarity. She stated the Unified Development Ordinance Text Amendment (TC2400002) contained a set of minor revisions to the UDO and the revisions were proposed to clarify the Sign Calculation Standards and applicability of the Transitional Use Area (TUA) Major Special Use Permit in Compact Suburban Design Districts. Ms. Seibel added the Planning Commission heard the zoning request on October 8, 2024, and recommended approval by a vote of 9-0.

Chair Allam opened the public hearing.

The Board asked if the development was for the GoTriangle Bus Station at Research Triangle Park. Ms. Seibel responded yes; adding the Triangle Mobility Hub was in the area.

Chair Allam closed the public hearing

The Board thanked the City-County Planning staff for adapting to Legislative changes and contacting the landowners in the area.

Motion 1:

Vice Chair Lee moved, seconded by Commissioner Valentine to adopt an ordinance amending the Unified Development Ordinance, incorporating revisions to Article 11, Sign Standards and Article 16, Design District.

The motion carried unanimously.

Motion 2:

Commissioner Burton moved, seconded by Commissioner Jacobs to adopt a Consistency Statement as required by N.C.G.S. Sec 160-D605.

The motion carried unanimously.


The Board inquired about the physical impact on County Services. Sara Young, Planning Director responded physical impact analysis was established for annexations only and the process of developing physical impact analysis for rezonings was being developed. She added the Planning Department was working with Emergency Medical Services to capture costs and develop impact analysis.

Adjournment

Commissioner Burton moved, seconded by Commissioner Valentine to adjourn the Regular Session meeting at 10:02 p.m.

The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Macio Carlton', written in a cursive style.

Macio Carlton
Deputy Clerk to the Board